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Massacre by Bombing

THE FACTS BEHIND THE BRITISH-AMERICAN ATTACK ON GERMANY

By VERA BRITTAIN

Editor's Note—The manuscript of this article, first printed in England under the title of *Seed of Chaos*, was received in this country after the publication of *Slaughter of the Innocent*, in the February issue of *Fellowship*. It has been slightly altered to bring the facts and statistics up to date, and an American Postcript has been added

FOREWORD

In his oration on Areopagus, St. Paul declared that God had made all men of one blood so that they might seek and find Him together; and this declaration remains to this day the classical clue to the right significance and conduct of life. In these days, however, it would appear that the chief end of man is mass fratricide; and all the science and technical skill that mankind has acquired with the years is devoted to the service of Death. In our time, as never before, war is showing itself in its logical colors. In the First World War, some shreds of the rules of war were observed to the end. Laws of war are intrinsically paradoxical; but so far as they went, they bore witness to the survival of some fragments of a Christian conscience among the combatants. But today these fragments are disappearing. The contesting parties pay little heed to the former decencies and chivalries, save among their own comrades.

Something of this story is told in the following pages, and it is hoped that it may move its readers to do something about it. In some way it should be possible to apprise the public authorities of the grave and mounting anxiety of ordinary folk as they daily read the story of incessant bombing in Europe. In the meantime, Christian people should be moved to examine themselves concerning their participation in this carnival of death—even though they be thousands of miles away. Here surely there is a call to repentance; that we have not acquainted ourselves with the verities and realities of what is being done in our name in Europe; and surely Christian obligation calls upon us to pray incessantly to God that He in His own way may bid the winds and waves of war be still.

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Massacre by Bombing

By VERA BRITTAIN

"The destruction of German industrial cities is proceeding at a constantly increasing pace . . . Berlin is now a shambles. The destruction of other, smaller targets will require much less time."

General George C. Marshall
February 4, 1944, *N. Y. Herald Tribune*

HOW much do the American and British people understand and approve of the policy of "obliteration bombing" now being inflicted by us upon the civilians of enemy and enemy-occupied countries, including numbers of young children born since the outbreak of war? The propagandist paragraphs in the press which describe this bombing and its results skillfully conceal their real meaning from the normally unimaginative reader by such carefully chosen phrases as *softening up* an area, *neutralizing the target, area bombing, saturating the defenses,* and *blanketing an industrial district.*

It is only when the facts are collected, and the terrible sum of suffering which they describe estimated as a whole, that we realize that, owing to our air raids, hundreds of thousands of helpless and innocent people in German, Italian, and German-occupied cities are being subjected to agonizing forms of death and injury comparable to the worst tortures of the Middle Ages.

From the extreme discomfort of this realization, the average citizen seeks to escape by two principal arguments.

Bombing to Shorten the War

In the first place he maintains that mass bombing will "shorten the war," a contention now much favored by government officials and some leading churchmen.

To this there are several replies.

First, there is no *certainty* that such a shortening of the war will result, and nothing less than absolute certainty entitles even the most ardent of the war's supporters to use these dreadful expedients. Mr. Churchill himself has described the mass bombing of German cities as an "experiment."[1] What does appear certain is the downward spiral in moral values, ending in deepest abysses of the human spirit, to which this argument leads. Those who remember the First World War will recall that precisely the same excuse—that it would "shorten" the period of hostilities—was given by the Germans for their policy of *Schrecklichkeit* (terror), and was used in connection with their submarine campaign. We refused to accept the argument as valid then or when the Nazis revived it in this war to justify the bombing of Warsaw, Rotterdam, Belgrade, London and Coventry.

Second, when the word "shorten" is used, it is generally meant to imply the limiting or reduction of the total amount of human suffering and destruction. Such a time test is misleading. In a vast, concentrated raid, lasting a few minutes, more persons may be killed or injured than in a modern major battle lasting two or three weeks, in addition to the destruction of an irreplaceable material heritage of buildings, art treasures and documents, representing centuries of man's creative endeavor. In fact, mass bombing of great centers of population represents a speed-up of human slaughter, misery and material destruction superimposed on that of the military fighting fronts.

Third, the "experiment" has demonstrated, so far, that mass bombing does not induce revolt or break morale. Victims are stunned, exhausted, apathetic, absorbed in the immediate tasks of finding food and shelter. But as they recover who can doubt that there will be, among the majority at any rate, the desire for revenge and a hardening process, even if, for a time, it may be subdued by fear? Thus we are steadily creating in Europe the psychological foundations for a Third World War.

Bombing for Revenge

The second main argument brought forward to excuse our present policy of obliteration bombing is that we too have suffered—as indeed we have—and that therefore we are *fully entitled to pay back what we have endured.*

With this double contention George Bernard Shaw dealt characteristically in a letter to the *Sunday Express* (November 28, 1943): "The blitzing of the cities has carried war this time to such a climax of infernal atrocity that all recriminations on that score are ridiculous. The Germans will have as big a bill of atrocities against us as we against them if we take them into an impartial international court."

There are three further replies that should also be considered carefully by all rational people.

First, investigations into the origins of civilian bombing (as distinct from the bombing that forms part of a military campaign) make clear the difficulty of justly assessing with whom lay the fault of starting it. The cumulative growth of civilian bombing to its present nightmare stage seems, on present information, to be an outstanding instance of the tragic fashion in which wartime cruelty grows like a snowball by its own momentum once the power of Juggernaut has taken control. Some accidental violation of international law, assumed to be deliberate, is repaid by a reprisal "in kind." The enemy "hits back"; we retaliate harder still; in each case the accidental consequences (such as the bombing of a church in mistake for a factory) are advertised by the victim as intentional, for propaganda purposes. So the grim competition goes on until the mass-murder of civilians becomes part of our policy, a descent into barbarism that we should have contemplated with horror in 1939.

Second, though parts of Britain suffered cruelly in the "blitz," some of the terrible inventions and tactics now

[1] See footnote 12, page 54.

being used were not known or practiced at that stage of the war. Even in those early days the knowledge of our distress and confusion was limited to the areas that endured them, and particularly to the surviving victims and to Civil Defense and rescue workers who actually had to deal with the shambles to which German bombs reduced many humble homes. It is, I believe, the comparative rarity of first-hand experience among the majority of the British and American people which accounts for their supine acquiescence in obliteration bombing.

My own experience is relatively small, but as a Londoner who has been in many raids and who spent eighteen months as a volunteer fireguard, I have seen and heard enough to know that I cannot acquiesce when this obscenity of terror and mutilation is imposed upon the helpless civilians of another country. Nor do I believe that the majority of our airmen, who are assured that mass bombing reduces the period of their own peril, really want to preserve their own lives by sacrificing German women and babies, any more than our soldiers would go into action using "enemy" mothers and children as a screen.

Third, retaliation in kind and worse means the reduction of ourselves to the level of our opponents whose perverted values have persuaded us to fight. However anxious we may be to win the war, the *way* in which we win it will also determine our future standing as nations. If we imitate and intensify the enemy's methods, we shall actually have been defeated by the very evils which we believe ourselves to be fighting!

It is to the credit of some of the worst-bombed areas of England that many of their inhabitants have recognized this vital truth. In April, 1941, when the British Institute of Public Opinion carried out a survey of the whole country's response to the question: "Would you approve or disapprove if the RAF adopted a policy of bombing the civilian population in Germany?" it was noticeable that *the people of the heavily bombed areas were less in favor of reprisal bombing than those who had escaped the raids.* The largest vote in favor of reprisals (76 percent of the population) came from the safe areas of Cumberland, Westmorland, and the North Riding. In the bombed areas of London, which had then endured eight months of heavy and continuous raids, 47 percent disapproved of reprisals, 45 percent approved, and the rest were undecided.[2]

When, therefore, on July 15, 1941, Mr. Churchill said at the County Hall: "If tonight the people of London were asked to cast their vote whether a convention should be entered into to stop the bombing of all cities, the overwhelming majority would cry, 'No, we will mete out to the Germans the measure, and more than the measure, that they have meted out to us,'" he was disregarding opinions ascertained only two months earlier.

"I wouldn't wish this trouble on any other woman!" cries the young mother in A. Burton Cooper's Lancashire play, *We Are The People,* after her small boy has been blown to pieces by a daylight bomb on a local playground. And that, I believe, is the normal reaction of every decent person, once real knowledge has come to him or her through individual suffering.

It is because I want you who read, to have such knowledge, so far as facts ascertained from sources available under wartime conditions can give it to you, that I am going to describe, with references to my sources of information, what our bombing policy means to those who have to endure its results. I shall have to quote some horrible details, but these are not included from sensational motives. They are given in order that you who read may realize exactly what the citizens of one Christian country are doing to the men, women and children of another. Only when you know these facts are you in a position to say whether or not you approve. If you do not approve, it is for you to make known your objection, *remembering always that it is the infliction of suffering, far more than its endurance, which morally damages the soul of a nation.*

The History of Our Bombing Offensive

1. Changes of Policy

In the early days of the war, the British government's insistence that Britain bombed only military objectives was matched by the righteous indignation of official communiques whenever German bombs fell on churches, hospitals, schools, or private dwellings. From the highest Ministerial circles to the lowest, this scrupulousness was maintained. On April 17, 1943 a letter from Sir Leo Chiozza Money to the *New Statesman* concluded with these words:

"Swift is the growth of hate. I would like to remind your readers that it was as recently as Jan. 27, 1940, that Mr. Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, condemned the bombing of an enemy as a 'new and odious form of attack,' and refused to listen to the clamor then arising that bombers should cease to drop leaflets by night and load up with 'beautiful bombs.' I may add that when the present writer read Mr. Churchill's strong denunciation of a new and odious form of warfare, it seemed to me (I wrote on February 10, 1940) that I recognized the good sense and good feeling I had always associated with the man who uttered it."

It is necessary only to quote some recent Ministerial pronouncements to realize how violent has been the change in the attitude of the Prime Minister and his deputies during the past twenty months, and how steep the deterioration in moral standards since the opening days of the war.

On June 2, 1942, Mr. Churchill gave the following undertaking to the House of Commons:

"As the year advances, German cities, harbors and centers of war production will be subjected to an ordeal the like of which has never been experienced by any country in continuity, severity or magnitude."

Nearly a year later, addressing the U. S. Congress in May, 1943, he issued a similar threat to Japan:

"It is the duty of those who are charged with the direction of the war to . . . begin the process so necessary and desirable of laying the cities and the other military centers of Japan in ashes, for in ashes they must surely lie before peace comes back to the world."

It seems possible that the American reaction to this obliteration policy was not precisely what the Prime Minister expected, for on September 8, 1943, the *News-Chronicle* reports President Roosevelt as assuring Congress that "we were not bombing tenements for the sadistic pleasure of killing as the Nazis did, but blowing to bits carefully selected targets—factories, shipyards, munition dumps."

Nevertheless, having spoken in July of "the systematic

[2] *London News-Chronicle,* May 2, 1941.

shattering of German cities," Mr. Churchill further expanded his theme to the House of Commons on September 21, 1943:

"The almost total systematic destruction of many of the centers of German war effort continues on a greater scale and at a greater pace. The havoc wrought is indescribable and the effect upon the German war production in all its forms . . . is matched by that wrought upon the life and economy of the whole of that guilty organization. . ."

On the same occasion he told the House: *"There are no sacrifices we will not make, no lengths in violence to which we will not go."* A week or two later, in a message to Bomber Command he described this process as "beating the life out of Germany."

It is hardly surprising that Mr. Churchill's subordinates have followed his lead with imitative threats. At Quebec in August Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information, stated to the press: "Our plans are to bomb, burn, and ruthlessly destroy in every way available to us the people responsible for creating this war."[3]

Echoes of these threats have appeared in the press in articles and paragraphs so numerous that it is impossible to quote them. In April, 1942, the new policy was welcomed by John Gordon, editor of the *Sunday Express,* in words the implications of which become more astonishing the longer they are considered:

"Germany, the originator of war by air terror, is now finding that terror recoiling on herself with an intensity that even Hitler in his most sadistic dreams never thought possible."[4]

2. *Changes of Method*

The change from "precision" to "obliteration" bombing has necessarily involved extensive changes in method and tactics. Though the policy is still officially the bombing of military objectives, these objectives have been extended to cover the "hearts" of great cities, containing offices, flats, tenements, and workers' dwellings; any "target," in fact, that will destroy Germany's morale and break the will of her people.

This was admitted by Sir Archibald Sinclair on March 31, 1943, in the House of Commons, in reply to a question by Mr. R. R. Stokes, who asked the Secretary of State for Air whether on any occasion instructions had been given to British airmen to engage in area bombing rather than limit their attention to purely military targets. Sir Archibald replied: "The targets of Bomber Command are always military, but night bombing of military objectives necessarily involves bombing the area in which they are situated."

Bombing an area in which military objectives are situated is, of course, exactly the method for which we condemned the Nazis in Warsaw, Rotterdam, and Belgrade. The lack of compunction to which it leads is illustrated by the following comment in the *Sunday Dispatch* of March 21, 1943:

"Bomber personnel, often in miserable weather, and under attack by vicious fighters, try to hit their targets. Any attempt to persuade them to worry unduly about civilians is an attempt to impair their military value."

The same loss of scrupulousness is shown by the actual carrying out of raids under conditions in which it is not even possible to distinguish residential areas from military or industrial targets. This growing habit was carried to its extreme in a raid on Frankfurt on November 25, 1943. According to the *London Daily Herald* of November 27, "There was thick cloud three miles deep" over the city when the bombers arrived. "The crews saw nothing of the town. It was blind bombing." The same process of bombing through heavy clouds was adopted during the raid on Cologne at the end of June, 1943, when the Cathedral was damaged. It has been applied to Berlin and other cities.

3. *Changes of Tactics*

The adoption of area bombing has been marked by many new developments that have increased the terror and torture of our raids. The chief of these has been the use of *cascade bombing*—otherwise known as *saturation raids*—by which a great number of heavy bombs are dropped on a limited area in a period so brief that immense destruction goes on simultaneously in all parts of the target city, and the defenses are unable to function effectively. The method is to set the center of cities on fire by means of many thousands of incendiary bombs, after which later planes dump successive loads of high explosive on fires already started —of necessity indiscriminately, since visibility is obscured by smoke!

On July 30, 1943, this comment appeared in *The Spectator:*

"Such a phenomenon as the discharge of 2,300 tons of explosives and incendiaries over a limited built-up area within fifty minutes has no sort of parallel in history. The heaviest of the raids on London, terrible as they seemed to us at the time, were by comparison quite small affairs."

The American magazine, *Time,* summarizing official statistics given out by Air Vice Marshall R. H. M. S. Saundby commented as follows:

"On May 30, 1942 the RAF loosed 17½ tons a minute on Cologne; on September 3, 1943 the delivery rate was 50 tons a minute on Berlin. In recent raids the rate was 120 tons of bombs per square mile in an hour, or 80 *times the intensity of London's heaviest attack.* The RAF's goal is 200 tons a minute."[5]

During the great raids on Hamburg, according to the *Daily Telegraph,*[6] the Germans reported a new RAF method of swamping the city's defenses.

"The RAF, they state, at the beginning of a raid mark the target area by a series of 'rings' of green flares, and the following waves of bombers drop their bombs in the periphery of these rings, so as to cut off the German ARP personnel to prevent it reaching these districts. Then the interior rings are littered with bombs and incendiaries.

"The terrific heat causes a vacuum of air in the bombed districts, and air rushes from other parts of the town. In this way regular tornadoes arise. They are so strong that people are thrown flat on the ground, and the fire brigades cannot get to the blitzed area with their equipment.

"These violent currents of air serve to spread the fire to surrounding districts.

"The 'ring system,' which was first used over Hamburg, has another effect. A number of people there died through lack of oxygen caused by the terrible heat. Hamburg has excellent shelters; they are, in fact, real bunkers, but it was found on opening some that though they were undamaged, many people had died from suffocation."

[3] *London News-Chronicle,* August 20, 1943.
[4] *Sunday Express,* April 20, 1942.
[5] *Time,* December 20, 1943.
[6] August 12, 1943.

When these Hamburg raids were concluded, Ronald Walker, Air Correspondent to the *News-Chronicle*, reported:

"The six attacks on the city, port and U-boat yards of Hamburg during four nights and three days probably come nearer than any other series of attacks on Germany to the Harris aim of blotting out a target. . . . Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, RAF Bomber Command Chief, has made his bombing plan quite plain—the complete destruction of the German industrial cities and ports, one by one. His idea is to pound them with blows of devastating weight and to keep up that pounding until there is no question of salvage or repair."

4. Sir Arthur Harris and His Policy

The change of RAF policy from "precision" to "area" bombing began on March 3, 1942, with the appointment of Sir Arthur Travers Harris to the control of Bomber Command. According to a press report on March 29, 1943, Air Marshal Billy Bishop, who himself told New Yorkers that he did not care "if there is not one house left standing in Germany" described Sir Arthur Harris as a "tiger with no mercy in his heart towards the enemy."

The pitiless policy of this man is backed, of course, by the determination of our political leaders to "bomb, burn, and ruthlessly destroy," as Brendan Bracken put it. To a handful of individuals invested with the disproportionate powers conferred by totalitarian war, millions of Germans, Italians and French owe the devastation of beautiful historic towns, and thousands of families in enemy and occupied countries, the death, injury, or mental derangement of young, helpless, and cherished members. These memories alone, of grief and unspeakable horror, are likely to prove an implacable obstacle to the building of a better world.

The old historic towns of Lübeck and Rostock were the first to suffer, in March and April, 1942, from the new form of bombing. According to *The Times* of January 1, 1943, the RAF destroyed more than 40 percent of the one and 70 percent of the other.[7] Then, on May 30-31, came the first thousand-bomber raid on Cologne, in which a neutral report gave the number of persons killed in the one night as 20,000, and Abetz, the Nazi representative in Paris, acknowledged between 11,000 and 15,000.

Under the heading "High Road to Hell," *Time*, (July 7, 1943), commented thus:

"The air offensive against Germany and Axis Europe is suffering from understatement. The objective is not merely to destroy cities, industries, human beings and the human spirit on a scale never before attempted by air action. The objective is to defeat Hitler with bombs, and to do it in 1943."

Is the "understatement" referred to by *Time* perhaps due to a recognition, by those who are responsible for the RAF onslaught, that the ordinary decent citizens of Britain and the United States would not continue to acquiesce in this type of bombing offensive if they were given full details, and realized what these attacks mean for human flesh and blood? The same issue of *Time* names the men who initiated the change in bombing tactics as "Air Marshal Chief Sir Arthur Travers Harris, chief of the RAF Bomber Command, and Major General Ira Clarence Eaker, commander of the U. S. Eighth Air Force."

[7] Official photographs show that the centers of these towns were devastated, the main shopping streets having been the targets, though far distant from any recognizable military objectives.

During a speech in Northamptonshire (November 6, 1943), Sir Arthur Harris declared:

"We propose entirely to emasculate every center of enemy production, forty of which are centers vital to his war effort and fifty that can be termed considerably important. We are well on the way to their destruction."

These ninety centers, said Sir Arthur, were all in Germany. Others in Italy and occupied territory would be "treated separately." To make the experiment of bringing Germany to her knees by bombing, we are thus committed to reduce to ruins ninety great cities, with their museums, libraries, hospitals, colleges, schools, churches—and human beings. That this can be done, *The Spectator* of July 30, 1943, left us in no doubt:

"Thanks to the vast American production, the scale" (of air attacks) "can still rise. It is over twice what it was a year ago; a year hence, if the war still requires it, it will be twice as much again."

We seem likely to have been right who were accustomed to state, during the twenty years' truce, that another war might well mean the end of civilization. Let us now consider how far human life and treasure have already been destroyed by our raids.

The Bombing of Germany

I am going to quote, first, some figures from German sources. Although we might not accept them if they stood alone, authoritative British and American figures which I shall also quote, go far toward making the German figures credible. They are probably an understatement, especially if we take into account the very great additional damage done by our bombing in the three months since the German figures were reported.

At the end of October, 1943, according to the Berlin correspondent of the Stockholm paper *Afton Tidningen*, the German Ministry of Home Security disclosed that 102,486 persons were killed in RAF raids on twelve German towns in the seven months from April 1 to October 25, 1943.[8]

The towns were: Hamburg, 28,350; Cologne, 18,146; Dortmund 15,008; Hanover, 6,320; Düsseldorf, 6,205; Bochum, 4,829; Duisberg, 4,763; Wuppertal, 4,635; Mannheim, 4,368; Nuremberg, 3,347; Frankfurt, 3,184; Kassel, 2,731.

These figures do not include bodies which could not be identified.

According to a member of the German Government Statistics Office in Berlin, 1,200,086 German civilians were killed or reported missing believed killed in air raids from the beginning of the war up to October 1, says a Zurich message. The number of people bombed out and evacuated owing to air-raid danger was 6,953,000. . . .[9]

The number killed by German air raids on Britain from the beginning of the war to October 31, 1943, is just over 50,000.[10] Apart from all that we have done to Italy and to German-occupied countries, our reprisals mean that on Germany alone we had before the end of October inflicted more than twenty-four times the amount of suffering that we have endured. The subsequent annihilation attacks on Berlin and other targets have, of course, greatly swelled

[8] This figure did not include those killed in the later colossal attacks on Berlin and other cities.

[9] *News-Chronicle*, Oct. 29, 1943. (Bold face mine.)

[10] The exact figure is 50,088 killed, this total being made up as follows: 22,842 men; 20,288 women; 6,424 children; 534 "unclassified" (presumably includes missing, believed killed).

that total of suffering. No doubt there are many non-adult minds which will find reason for satisfaction in the anguish that we have caused to the enemy. But others will reflect more responsibly that each one of those million dead (to say nothing of the injured and seven million homeless) have relatives and friends who will remember. Their memories will be even more dreadful than those of the post-war blockade in 1919, which was a chief origin of nazism. We shall have to reckon with those memories when the days of rebuilding come.

On May 29, 1943, the German radio gave the following details of non-military buildings completely destroyed in air raids: churches, 133; schools, 191; hospitals, 108; while "heavily damaged" were 494 churches, 920 schools, and 231 hospitals. The number must have risen enormously since then, for in his speech at Cheltenham on November 5, 1943, Sir Archibald Sinclair disclosed that during May, June and July, 1943, Bomber Command dropped over 52,000 tons of bombs. He added that while five percent of Coventry was destroyed in the German attacks of 1940, 40 percent of Essen had been virtually destroyed, 54 percent of Cologne, and 74 percent of Hamburg.[11]

Coming now to British and American statistics the few paragraphs which I shall quote next are illuminating.

According to the *News-Chronicle* of July 3, 1943, the total bomb tonnage dropped by the *Luftwaffe* on British cities in the peak year of 1940-41 was approximately 35,000 tons. At no period did the "blitz" reach an average of 750 tons a night. The biggest raid was about 450 tons on London on one night of 1941. In April, 1941, one of the more intense months of raiding on Britain, the Nazis dropped about 6,000 tons (i.e. less than half of the RAF bomb load in June, 1943).

In the second half of October, 1943, an article by Air Commodore Howard-Williams, Air Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, revealed that in the 100 days and nights from July 9 to October 17, no less than 74,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Germany and German-occupied Europe by the RAF and the U. S. Army Air Force. Of this total, Bomber Command dropped 56,000 tons in night attacks, 48,000 tons being dropped on targets in Germany. The writer justifies these attacks by quoting an RAF commentator to the effect that "the enemy's industrial cities were now great labor camps" in which the houses of the workers were "virtual barracks." The commentator did not mention how many children lived in these "barracks."

Later Air Commodore Howard-Williams informs us that "half of Germany's principal cities have already been heavily bombed. Some seventeen of them have been very severely mauled. . . . For instance, Hamburg has had the equivalent of at least 60 'Coventries,' Cologne 17, Düsseldorf 12, and Essen 10."

Time on December 20, 1943 compared Air Vice Marshall Saundby's figures of German devastation with what they would mean to American cities. *Time* said:

"One-fourth of the area in German cities attacked by the RAF since May 11, 1940 has been devastated. In the ruins of Hamburg, Düsseldorf and Cologne 'civilized life . . . is no longer possible.' Seventeen major cities in northwest Germany are 'liabilities . . . to the enemy war machine.' Six others need only one more good pasting to join those seventeen. In all, 31 cities throughout Germany have been smacked since last December in 48 attacks of 500 tons or more. In roughly comparable U. S. terms, similar air attacks would have devastated three-quarters of Los Angeles, Cleveland, Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Newark, Louisville, St. Paul. 'Civilized life' would no longer be possible in Detroit, Pittsburgh, Buffalo."

Eighteen months ago, in the *Sunday Express* of September 13, 1942, Mr. John Gordon assured us that "for the first time the Germans are really beginning to squeal." They have not yet "squealed" to an extent which terminates the indescribable ordeal of their mothers and children. How much longer will the British and American people consent to this infliction, in their name, of wholesale massacres which even their leaders regard as experimental?[12]

"If the growing horror of air war, which surpasses all powers of imagination, does not diminish, the day must come when the limits of endurance are passed."[13]

Are we really willing to wait and watch without protest till those limits of endurance are reached? Not protest and revolt, but apathy, fatigue, and a mechanical endeavor to save what can still be saved, are the immediate results of concentrated bombing. The breaking-point—difficult in any case to reach with a Gestapo-ruled people—may still be far away.

The Facts Behind the Figures

I propose now to examine the effects of our raids upon ten sample German cities or areas, dealing with these in alphabetical order for convenience of reference.

1. Aachen

Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle) was a relatively small and pleasant industrial town of 160,000 inhabitants, situated on the Belgo-German border. I stayed there for a few days in 1936. Besides being industrial it was also full of history, one of the most famous buildings being the Basilica with its relics of Charlemagne, who made Aachen his capital and was buried there in 814.

The town has been attacked by the RAF several times, the Basilica being reported damaged after a raid during the summer of 1941. How badly it suffered and whether it has been damaged again I do not know. In a recent heavy raid (July, 1943) several 8,000-pound bombs were dropped, and a few hours later smoke from the fires had risen four miles high. The Berlin radio reported: "The streets of Aachen are burning. Flames leap up from every house. The streets are full of rubble, splintered glass, and burning beams."

Long before this raid Sir Archibald Sinclair, reported in the *London Times* of March 5, 1942, had said: "Aachen and Münster are certainly in worse condition than Coventry and Plymouth." According to the *Times* of January 1, 1943, 30 percent of Aachen (i.e. nearly 160 acres, which is more than the devastated area of the City of London) had already been destroyed at that time.

2. Berlin

After a great RAF raid on March 1, 1943, 1,000 people were reported killed, fires were still burning three days

11 The *London Times*, Nov. 6, 1943.

12 "They (Harris and Eaker) have assured their military superiors that Germany can be bombed out of the war this year. . . . Winston Churchill stated the reaction of the global strategists when he said: '*The experiment is well worth trying so long as other measures are not excluded.*'" *Time*, June 7, 1943. (Italics the editor's.)

13 *London Sunday Express*, Aug. 29, 1943.

later, and the Friedrichstrasse had 45 craters. Reporting this attack, the *Daily Herald* (March 20, 1943) reminded its readers that only twice during the raids on London—on April 16 and 19, 1941—were over 1,000 deaths reported.

On June 10, 1943, after further raids, very full details of damage throughout the city were published in the *Daily Telegraph*. Its correspondent wrote: "As one of my informants put it with eloquent brevity, 'Berlin's West End looks more like a battlefield than a city'."

On August 23, a heavy raid occurred in which 1,700 tons of bombs were dropped in fifty minutes. On August 25, 26 and 27, paragraphs in the *Daily Telegraph* described the after-effects:

"From Leipzigerstrasse to the Chauseestrasse looks like No Man's Land," reported its Stockholm correspondent. One traveller said:

"I have lived many years in Berlin, yet at no time during that drive" (in a taxi through the city) "could I identify which street we were passing through. There were just ruins, shattered all, and fire wherever we passed. . . . From Friedrichstrasse, down Belle Alliance Platz, the whole of the Tempelhof district had been reduced to a wilderness."

According to reports from Berne, the first official Berlin police estimates of the casualties in this raid put the dead at 5,680.

Further heavy raids occurred on August 31 and on September 3, when 1,000 tons were dropped in twenty minutes. The *Daily Telegraph* of September 20, 1943, carried a long description of the consequences of these attacks, from which the following extracts are taken:

"A picture of Berlin as it is today is given by a Swiss eyewitness article in the *St. Gallen Tagblatt*, in which he states: 'The last air attack on Berlin inflicted, particularly in the West End of the city, colossal damage, and also in the inner city and at the southern end at Lankwitz and Lichterfelde. In these districts streets were hardly negotiable. . . . . .

" 'Efforts have been made to save people buried under the debris by tunnelling from the neighboring houses, but if this is too difficult nothing is undertaken as it is assumed the imprisoned people are dead owing to burst gas and water pipes.

" 'It was nerve-shattering to see women, demented after the raids, crying continuously for their lost children, or wandering speechless through the streets with dead babies in their arms.

" 'In the Alexanderplatz Station there was a fight among women struggling with one another for seats in a train, aboard which some of their children were, as the train showed signs of steaming off.

" 'Schools have been closed, and there is much disorganization in the evacuation of children and parents.' "

These devastating raids, however, were themselves mere curtain-raisers for the "grand attack" which began on November 18, when a force described by the *Daily Herald* as "the greatest number of four-engined bombers ever to raid Germany" dropped more than 2,000 tons of bombs on Berlin and Ludwigshafen. The evening papers next day carried the headline: "350 Blockbusters Flung on Berlin."

This onslaught was followed on November 22 and 23 by further huge raids which turned Berlin into "the most bombed city in the world." In the three raids together, 5,000 tons of incendiaries and high explosive were rained on the city. The *Daily Herald* of November 24 announced the second great raid under a big photograph of four grinning pilots, which struck the note of jubilation this time indulged in by the entire large-circulation press.

The *Daily Telegraph*, as usual, carried the most comprehensive details of the raids, and gave the fullest description of their meaning for the tormented civilian population. Describing the attack of November 22 as "very nearly the heaviest raid on any target in the history of air warfare," the newspaper continued: "Reports from neutral capitals last night made it clear that the havoc was on an unprecedented scale, particularly in the center of the city. . . . Thousands were reported killed and injured. . . . Unbroken heavy clouds lay along the whole route. . . . We bombed Berlin 'blind.' The bombers followed the brightly lit 'target indicators' . . . although the target area itself was not seen."

On November 25, after the third great raid, the same newspaper continued the story by quoting a Swedish business man, the first air passenger to arrive in Stockholm from Berlin after living through the onslaughts of November 22 and 23. He reported Berlin as being "ten times worse today than it was yesterday. The Berlin we know has simply ceased to exist." Ossian Goulding, the *Daily Telegraph's* special correspondent at Stockholm, described the "red-rimmed eyes and white, lined face" of the speaker. Continuing to quote him, this correspondent wrote:

"The fire brigades and ARP personnel are powerless to cope with the situation. Day has been turned to night by the billowing clouds of evil-smelling smoke which fill the streets . . . *Unter den Linden* is a shambles today, there are long lines of burning buildings in it. . . The University State Library is still burning. . . .

"Blockbusters freed a number of wild animals from Berlin's zoo. Troops turned out with rifles and machine-guns to hunt leopards, elephants, bears, tigers and lions in the Tiergarten. . . Men who should know estimate that 85 percent of the suburb of Spandau has been wrecked. The situation there is so serious that it has been decided to evacuate the whole district. . . . I saw wretched creatures, trapped by flames, hurl themselves from fourth-floor windows to death. Asphalt in the streets is alight everywhere, while over all lies the stench of phosphorus bombs.

"I would describe the morale of the city as fatalistic, exhausted and grim, yet determined to stick it. I saw no panic and no demonstration of any kind, although I heard several persons become hysterical in the shelter where I took refuge during the actual raids.

"I cannot agree either that there has been any voluntary mass evacuation of the city. Certainly thousands of people have moved to the suburbs or to the country beyond, but more to find a roof over their heads than because they are actuated by fear. . . .

"As for myself, my only concern now is to sleep round the clock. I never knew a possible air attack could be like this; that it could affect nerves, digestion, eyesight, and everything in this way."

Another *Daily Telegraph* correspondent from "Somewhere in Europe," reported:

"The destruction . . . is almost impossible to describe. Whole streets are ablaze. The heat is so fierce that people are collapsing because of it. . . Tens of thousands of people are leaving the city. . . . Their faces are blackened with soot and smoke. Many of them have bandaged hands, signs that they were burned in frantic and useless efforts to put out the flames of the thousands of fires that raged last night and the night before. . . . In the burning areas people can be seen vainly trying to save what is left of their belongings. . . . The three raids coming on top of one another have stunned the people. Nazi propaganda that the people of Berlin cursed the RAF is wrong. Instead, after the raid, the people of Berlin could find little to say. They only picked up what they had managed to gather and moved silently on. . . .

"There are various figures of casualties. One says that 25,000 were killed on Monday night and the same number

on Tuesday night. The Swiss newspaper *Die Tat* states that between 20,000 and 30,000 bodies, victims of Monday night's raid, have already been recovered. . .

"The population is still so stunned that it is too early to gauge their reactions."

On November 26 the *Daily Telegraph* reported Sir Arthur Harris as saying that the bombing of Berlin would continue "until the heart of Nazi Germany ceases to beat." That night the third heavy raid of the week, and the fourth in eight days, was made on the German capital. The next day *The Observer's* Air Correspondent, Frederick Tomlinson, commented as follows:

"The scientists who have developed our newest bombs and our latest aircraft equipment have presented us with a terrible weapon, the logical purpose of which is not so much to destroy industrial buildings as isolated objectives but *to make industrial life* with its attendant war production *impossible in all the large cities of Germany.*

"Bomber Command is confident that if it is adequately supplied it can achieve its object, though it may require not the 13,000 tons (which have already been dropped on it) but 50,000 tons to destroy a target such as Berlin."

The German capital had a peacetime population of 4,332,000, being the world's fifth largest city; only New York, London, Tokyo, and Paris were larger. In area Berlin's 341 square miles compare closely to New York's 365. Berlin has been struck by over 100 air raids. According to General H. H. Arnold, Chief of the American Army Air Forces, three-fourths of the city has been razed.[14] The RAF's more conservative figures stated that up to December 16, their forces had demolished between 1,300 and 1,400 acres of buildings. The London bureau of the *Herald-Tribune* cabled:

"The estimates of damage, it was emphasized, count acres of buildings as just that. Streets, courtyards, squares or gardens are not included in the total estimate that at least 17 percent of Berlin's 8,000 acres of actual buildings have been either destroyed or so damaged as to render them useless. . . . No capital in the world has ever suffered such damage . . . it is expected at least one house in every four in Berlin will be found to have been rendered uninhabitable."[15]

In just three attacks of last November's raids, the city was "hit by two-thirds the weight of bombs dropped on London during the whole period from September 1940 to July 1941."[16] Commenting on the strategy of concentration bombing, Drew Middleton, from whom the foregoing quotation is taken, cabled:

"Concentrated bombing—that is, the dropping of the greatest tonnage in the shortest possible time—has another advantage besides the obvious one of saturating fire, air raid precaution services and anti-aircraft batteries. The simultaneous explosion of a great number of heavy bombs not only creates tremendous havoc near by but cracks the foundations of buildings far removed from the site of the blast."

Hanson Baldwin, military expert of the *New York Times,* who is not given to exaggeration, tells what a single big bomb can do. He writes:

"One very large British bomb is known to have devastated a built-up section of a German city as large as the Yankee Stadium. A 1,100-pound bomb will penetrate more than twenty-four feet of earth and will blast a crater almost fifty feet in diameter and eight feet deep."[17]

A European correspondent of the *New York Times* quoted (January 9, 1944) a young man who had left Berlin in the first week of January, just after an air attack.

"He saw people he knew coming out of shelters quite transformed—white hair, insane, indifferent, wandering about, running away, not knowing where to go.

"He saw others sitting in comfortable chairs in the middle of large streets as if waiting for some event. He saw animals in the Zoo being shot by the police as they were attacking the wounded. . . .

"More than 1,800,000 persons left town the first day, roaming about the country to seek shelter. Cold, lack of food and curiosity brought them back again three days later."

"Shattering Allied raids on Berlin," says the newspaper *PM* (February 2, 1944), "are estimated to have cut the city's population by death and evacuation from 5,000,000 to 3,000,000."

After this on the night of February 15, 1944 came what the *New York Times* described as the final and decisive phase of the battle of Berlin "when in the heaviest air assault of history nearly 1,000 British four-motored bombers dropped more than 2,800 American tons of bombs on the city. During a thirty-minute nightmare high explosives and incendiaries fell at the rate of more than eighty tons each minute."

3. *Cologne*

Cologne, a city of 750,000 inhabitants, was one of the most beautiful and historical towns in Germany. "The glory of Cologne," says *Nelson's Encyclopedia,* "is its Cathedral, one of the noblest and most impressive examples of Gothic architecture in existence. Its foundations were laid in 1248."

I have visited the city and its Cathedral on several occasions. In the narrow, crooked streets in the center of the historic area, there were many houses of the 15th and 16th centuries, and even earlier.

As the chief city of the Rhineland, Cologne has suffered repeated raids which have given it the equivalent of "17 Coventries." On May 30, 1942, it was selected for the first of Sir Arthur Harris's 1,000-ton "saturation raids." *The Times* of Jan. 1, 1943, reported a senior officer of the RAF as saying: "The City of London contained less than 120 acres of devastation. In Bomber Command's big raid on Cologne more than 600 acres were devastated."

During the summer of 1943, the RAF in three great raids destroyed more than 80 percent of the central city area and 75 percent of the other fully built-up districts on the west bank of the Rhine. According to the *Evening Standard* of June 30, German overseas radio said that in addition to damage to the Cathedral, the celebrated Roman Church of St. Cuthbert was also a victim of the bombs. It put the number of churches destroyed in Cologne at about thirty-five.

On August 5, the *Daily Telegraph* quoted a detailed report of the raid havoc, given to the Swiss newspaper *St. Gallen Tagblatt* by a Swiss citizen who had just returned from Cologne, where he had lived since 1936. The inner city, he said, was finally destroyed on the night of June 28, when, it was estimated, nearly 1,000 tons of bombs were dropped. The previous month a "complete job" had been made of the suburbs, when whole working-class areas were razed to the ground.

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14 United Press dispatch, January 7, 1944.

15 *New York Herald-Tribune,* January 11, 1944.

16 *New York Times,* November 26, 1943.

17 *New York Times,* November 18, 1943.

Speaking of the actual damage done during the raids, this witness said:

"Except for the cathedral and a few isolated houses, the old and inner city of Cologne has ceased to exist. Among buildings destroyed are the Town Hall, the Hansa Hall with its well-known Gothic facade, and the Wallraf Richarts Museum. . .

"Around the Cathedral, barely thirty yards off, all hotels and business premises have been burned to their foundations. The Savoy Hotel collapsed. From the big Buelheim suspension bridge I gazed on what ought to have been the panorama of Cologne. I saw only masses of thick smoke. As I rode towards the city I noticed that the trees along the Rhine were stripped of their foliage and covered with thick dust. I have always imagined that a prehistoric landscape without life must have been like this. The sight of human beings moving about in it gave me a cold shiver. I seemed to be on another planet.

"In Cologne itself people looked apathetic. They were too tired to talk. It was then only seven hours after the raid. . . In front of houses lay goods and chattels, and also people in a state of utter exhaustion.

"In the Glockengasse I came on a woman searching among a score of corpses for a relative. Further on in the city, in a big square, I saw bodies laid out in hundreds."

4. *Düsseldorf*

Once a bright, clean town with pleasant parks and friendly inhabitants, Düsseldorf was described by the *News-Chronicle* Air Correspondent after the heavy raid of June 12, 1943, as "a dead city. It was killed in a night." More than 380 acres of the town had, however, been already damaged by the end of 1942.

Thirty-six hours after the June raid, the *Sunday Times* commented: "Raids on the scale of Friday night's attack on *Düsseldorf* mean the virtual blotting-out of the city as far as ordinary residential life is concerned." On June 22, the *News-Chronicle* added: "According to the well-informed Catholic Swiss newspaper *Vaterland*, 400,000 of Düsseldorf's population of 600,000 are homeless. Twenty thousand people have been killed."

A neutral report by a Swiss correspondent in *Das Volksrecht* (Zurich) on October 2, 1943, ran as follows:

"Düsseldorf made the most frightful impression of all the western German cities. This once beautiful city is today a heap of ruins. The gaiety of its population has vanished. There are sad faces to be seen everywhere. The new railway station is completely destroyed. The station square with its great hotels and the main post office is covered with ruins. All the streets converging on the square show the same picture of destruction. The center, north and south of the city have suffered most. All the entertainment buildings have disappeared: the Municipal Theatre, the Concert House, the Jaegerhof Castle, the Apollo Theatre and all the great cinemas and department stores such as Tietz. The fashionable hotels such as Breitenbacher Hof, the Park Hotel and also the Hochhaus, are completely burned out. A high police officer told me that 2,500 people were killed during one night of heavy bombardment and that the Provincial Fire Insurance building still covers its victims. 18,000 dwelling houses have been destroyed in Düsseldorf and 350,000 people rendered homeless. These figures do not include the destruction in the (industrial) suburbs of Gerresheim and Benrath."

Even under these conditions, however, the city was not dead enough for Bomber Command. On November 5, 1943, an article by Wing Commander Charles Bray reported yet another "obliteration raid":

"RAF in great strength dropped over 2,000 tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs on Germany on Wednesday night. This brought the total weight of bombs dropped in the 24 hours to 4,000 tons, the greatest weight ever dropped in a day and night operation. Düsseldorf was the main target, and the raid was all over in 27 minutes. After the 2,000 ton raid on June 13, reconnaissance photographs showed that two-thirds of the central city had been destroyed. It has now been raided 58 times. Nineteen of our bombers were lost."

5. *Hamburg*

The destruction of Hamburg, between July 24 and August 2, 1943, like the later mass attacks on Berlin, may testify to our capacity to win the war, but it also provides irrefutable evidence of the moral and spiritual abyss into which we have descended.

In eight heavy raids during ten days and nights, a total of about 10,000 tons of high explosives and incendiaries was dropped on this city of 1,800,000 inhabitants, completely destroying nine square miles, or 77 percent of the built-up area (*Daily Telegraph*, Sept. 20, 1943). "Hardly anyone, it is alleged, escaped in the heavy populated area of many miles on which the Allies planted a carpet of hundreds of thousands of explosives and incendiaries. . . . At least 20,000 perished in shelters alone." (*Daily Mail*, Oct. 9, 1943). One RAF commentator admits (*Daily Telegraph*, Sept. 20, 1943) that "the greatest destruction from these raids has been to business and residential property, especially in the built-up area."

Photographs taken after these raids revealed that "of Hamburg's fully built-up 4,000 acres, 1,700 have been destroyed, while of 3,400 less densely built-up acres, 1,900 have also been completely shattered" (*Daily Telegraph*, August 6, 1943). An officer of the RAF who had been over Hamburg said:

"The term raid is no longer expressive enough for what is happening. From what I have seen in two of the six air attacks made within 72 hours the destruction is truly devastating. In comparison the enemy raids on London were child's play. What is going on at Hamburg can be repeated on any target we select. Hamburg is the first to be dealt with. . ." (*Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 29, 1943.)

Another RAF commentator, describing the raids as "the most striking bombing event in history," said: "To all intents and purposes a city of 1,800,000 inhabitants lies in absolute ruins. . . . It is probably the most complete blotting-out of a city that ever happened."

An eye-witness of the raids, writing in the Swiss newspaper, *National-Zeitung*, reported:

"We passed whole streets, squares, and even districts. . . that had been razed. Everywhere were charred corpses, and injured people had been left unattended. We will remember those Hamburg streets as long as we live. Charred adult corpses had shrunk to the size of children. Women were wandering about half-crazy. *That night, the largest workers' district of the city was wiped out.*"[19]

"A preliminary estimate of the killed in the eight heavy raids on Hamburg was more than 58,000." (AP message from Stockholm, *Daily Telegraph*, August 9, 1943). The official German estimate, as is the habit with all official estimates, which are provided for home as well as foreign consumption, put this figure much lower, though it admittedly left out the unidentifiable dead. Facts which I am about to record suggest that these must have reached appalling proportions in Hamburg. 18,000 people were also reported to have been drowned there when the Elbe Tunnel received a direct hit.[20]

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[19] Quoted in *Reynold's News*, Aug. 8, 1943. (Italics mine.)

[20] Reuter's message from Zurich, *Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 25, 1943.

A Danish consular official, interviewed by the Stockholm newspaper *Aftonbladet* after he had escaped from the blitzed city, said:

"Hamburg has ceased to exist. I can only tell what I saw with my own eyes—district after district razed to the ground. When you drive through Hamburg you drive through corpses. They are all over the streets, and even in tree-tops."

Swedish seamen who arrived in Malmoe alleged that not more than fifty houses remain standing in the whole of Hamburg. "On Saturday," they said, "the destruction was so complete that not even the sirens were working."[21]

Exaggerated as the first part of this statement appears to be, a paragraph in the *Evening Standard* of November 29, 1943, reported that "it is now possible to drive for half an hour through the center of Hamburg without passing a single house." According to this information, which reached Reuters from Stockholm, "a large part of the town was said to have been so competely devastated that 'there is no point in clearing it.' "

Other Swedish refugees described the terrible character of our phosphorus incendiary bombs:

"They talked of the strange sensation of seeing gardens on fire in a city ravaged by flames. Hundreds of people were found burned to death in the streets and the clothing was scorched off many by the fires. About 47,000 dead bodies were counted before search work began, and estimates of people killed vary from 65,000 to 200,000. . . .

"The town is almost deserted. For a fortnight the fires have raged unchecked and the people are almost poisoned by the smoke and the ghastly smell that hangs over the empty streets, where the walls are still radiating heat.

"Some of the refugees, who were wearing strange evacuee clothes like beach pajamas, described the city as 'sheer hell.' Panic often broke out in large seven to eight-story shelters, which held 3,000 to 6,000 people, during the terrific explosions."[22]

A stoker who deserted from a German ship corroborated these facts in an interview with the Stockholm correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. "People," he said, "went mad in the shelters. They screamed and threw themselves, biting and clawing the doors which were locked against them by the wardens. . . ."[23]

Other reports stated that owing to the great heat of the fires, people died from suffocation in shelters, and on September 20 this was confirmed in the following (translated) article by the editor of the *Baseler Nachrichten* (Basle News).[24]

This article describes how, as the result of a physical phenomenon produced by a mass fire during one of the Hamburg raids, many more persons perished in a few hours than the total of air raid victims in London since the beginning of the war:

"During the bombing of Hamburg there was a catastrophe in one densely populated part of the town of several square kilometres which eclipsed all previous happenings of the bombing war. It occurred as a result of the area being covered with mines, high-explosives and phosphorus bombs and hundreds of thousands of ordinary incendiaries.

"It must be emphasized that the effect was one which can only be achieved when bombing densely populated residential districts, but not when bombing factory districts. Every physicist of the air war could have calculated this effect in advance if the number of high explosive and incendiary bombs to be dropped on a given area were known to him. It is a question of the well-known fact that every open fire sucks in the oxygen it needs from the surrounding atmosphere, and that large fires, unless there is a strong wind, will lead to the creation of so-called air chimneys up which the flames will rush with ever-increasing force. If the area of the fire covers several square kilometres, then the flames licking out of individual rows and blocks of houses will combine into one big blanket of fire, covering the entire area and rushing up to ever greater heights. According to English reports, the Hamburg fire reached a height of six kilometres, that is, up to that height the heat rose in one compact body.

"Under these conditions the following occurs: within the area of the fire a rush of air is created, reaching the strength of a typhoon. The effect is that of enormous bellows pumping air into this district from all directions; for the sea of flames sucks in air from its surroundings. In this, the streets serve as channels through which the air passes toward the center and at the same time the air rushing through the streets sucks the flames from the burning houses horizontally into the streets. Thus, human beings and flames will compete for the available oxygen and, naturally, a fire of this size will get the better of it. The flames suck the last remains of oxygen from all rooms, shelters and cellars, and at the same time devour all the oxygen in the streets.

"The immediate result in the cellars is a shortage of oxygen and breathing difficulties for the people present. At the same time the temperature in the shelters rises unbearably, but the people are prevented from leaving the shelters during the early stages of the bombing by the constant rain of high explosive, incendiary and phosphorus bombs, which release a fine shower consisting of a mixture of rubber and phosphorus. Experience has shown that when the people finally make up their minds to leave the cellars it is too late. They have no strength left to carry out their decision, and even if they have they lack the strength to resist the heat and the lack of oxygen in the street. It is easy to see that men, with their greater power of resistance and stouter clothing, are better able to resist such a method of attack than women and children. That is why the majority of the victims are women and children. Numerous completely charred bodies of women and children were found along the outer walls to the houses; women and children in light summer clothing who emerged from the cellars into the storm of fire in the street were soon converted into burning torches.

"Naturally, hundreds and thousands of men too lost their lives in the streets of this district. Hamburg experts who are in charge of the salvaging of bodies have stated that only a minute percentage of the population residing there can have escaped with its life under the conditions prevailing during the attack. The whirlwind surrounded the entire district with a fiery wall and only those were able to save themselves who escaped at the very beginning. Even medium sized squares and wide streets offer no protection.

"The condition of the cellar shelters, which have meanwhile been opened, give some indication of the temparature which must have prevailed in the streets. The people who remained in these rooms were not only suffocated and charred but reduced to ashes. In other words, these rooms which, without exception, became death-chambers for dozens and hundreds of people, must have reached a temperature such as is not reached in the burning chambers of a crematorium. One doctor who supervised the salvage of the bodies remarked that the incineration of the bones had in many cases been more complete in the cellars than it is in the normal process of cremation. Obviously, it is impossible to identify the bodies, as all the belongings of the people have also been reduced to ashes.

"The 20,000 bodies salvaged so far in Hamburg come mainly from this district. Even today, the work of salvaging is still extremely difficult because the temperature in the cellars a fortnight after the fire is still such that any introduction of oxygen makes the fire flare up again.

"The many reports of survivors of burning women and children, and of women throwing their children into canals, are, therefore, not invented. How great was the tempera-

21 *Sunday Express*, Aug. 8, 1943.
22 *London Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 14, 1943.
23 *London Daily Telegraph*, Aug. 25, 1943.
24 September 9, 1943.

ture prevailing in these streets is further proved by the fact that the glass in the windows and metal frames were reduced to ash and cinders.

"As we have said, all this occurred in a strictly defined district of some kilometres square. Obviously, effects like those described can only be achieved in densely populated residential districts with high houses and relatively narrow streets. The streets, however, need not be very narrow, for roughly fifty women and children were found suffocated, half charred, and with all their clothing torn from their bodies by the storm, on a playing field which was situated at the centre of a street crossing. It appears, therefore, that the air war in this form can indeed turn entire districts of a large city, and, above all, the residential quarter of workers and employees, into a fiery grave which no one can escape who has not the courage to flee in the early stages through the rain of phosphorus, high explosive and incendiary bombs."

6. *Mainz*

Mainz, in the grand-duchy of Hesse, was one of the most important commercial centers on the Rhine. It was also a city of unusual historic interest, having been founded, as "Maguntiacum," in 13 B.C. Its importance dated from 747, when it was made an Archbishopric. The picturesque Cathedral in the Marktplaz dated in its more recent form from the 12th to the 14th centuries, with later restorations.

In an RAF raid carried out in August, 1942, this Cathedral, and many other cultural monuments, were burnt to the ground. According to the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* the Bishop's Palace was also seriously damaged, and five churches were obliterated.[25]

During November, 1942, a visitor to the Exhibition at Messrs. Rootes, in Piccadilly, of photographic enlargements showing the devastation caused by air raids on German and other continental cities, was given the following description of Mainz by an RAF official guide:

"The whole core of the city is destroyed. The total area of devastation within the city equals approximately 135 acres.

"This is the heart of Mainz, the largest area of concentrated devastation in any German city. Fifty-five acres in the city center have been devastated. Ruined civic buildings include museums, churches, schools. There is hardly a house habitable or a building useful in the center of the city. Shops, offices, art galleries are destroyed. Here a 4,000-pound bomb has fallen; what was a built-up area is now an empty space."

7. *Münster*

The old town of Münster, the capital of Westphalia, contained a beautiful Romanesque Cathedral and many other architectural treasures. Of this city, a foreign observer was quoted as saying:

"I have not seen Lübeck or Rostock, but I did see Münster some days after you had bombed it several times. There was hardly a whole building standing in the middle of the town. House after house was an empty shell of blackened walls. Street after street was a mere avenue between heaps of rubble.

"Münster was, in fact, a sort of Guernica on a larger scale—a terrifying demonstration of what persistent mass bombing could do in a limited area. Increase the scale, and you will get the same result in wider areas. There is a limit to what people can stand, and, as I say, that limit can be coldly calculated and achieved."[26]

On January 1, 1943, the *Times* reported that 260 acres of this small city had been devastated. More recently, on October 13, 1943, recording that "Münster has frequently been bombed," and that "the territory of the Reich is being battered and laid waste as never before in the history of modern warfare," Noel Panter, Zurich correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph,* quoted a German spokesman's description of a British and American raid on Sunday, October 10:

"The attack took place while worshippers filled the churches, and that is one reason for the high casualties. As Münster has no industries worth mentioning, the town and the immediate vicinity were not strongly protected."

Noel Panter goes on to comment that "whatever industries Münster may or may not possess nowadays, the correspondent carefully conceals the fact that it is a big Army supply and administrative center and an important communications center."

Having previously remarked on the "quite unusual sense of reverence" with which German spokesmen now describe Münster as an "episcopal city," he adds:

"As for the contention that the raid was of an especially ignoble kind because the churches were filled, *even Goebbels could hardly be able to persuade the German people that the British and American Air Forces can be expected to consider the times of church services in enemy countries.*"

The italics are mine. According to this argument, it was entirely reasonable of the *Luftwaffe* to bomb to death a number of children attending Sunday school at a church in Torquay!

The description of Münster as "an episcopal city" is not incorrect, as a Saxon bishopric was founded there by Charlemagne in 805. Since the war, the anti-Nazi pronouncements of its courageous Bishop, Count von Gafen, have become well-known to those who follow events in Germany. The town possessed numerous medieval buildings, including the Gothic Church of St. Lambert (14th Century), and a university founded about 1771. In its Town Hall, built in 1335, the Treaty of Westphalia, which concluded the Thirty Years' War, was signed on October 24, 1648. Of this war, James Harvey Robinson wrote in *The History of Western Europe,* a standard school textbook first published in 1902:

"The accounts of the misery and depopulation of Germany caused by the Thirty Years' War are well-nigh incredible. Thousands of villages were wiped out altogether; in some regions the population was reduced by one half, in others to a third, or even less, of what it had been at the opening of the conflict. The flourishing city of Augsburg was left with but sixteen thousand souls instead of eighty thousand. The people were fearfully barbarized by privation and suffering and by the atrocities of the soldiers of all the various nations. Until the end of the 18th century" (i.e. 150 years) "Germany was too exhausted and impoverished to make any considerable contribution to the culture of Europe."

The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, however, boasts that the territory of the Reich is being laid waste as never before in the history of modern warfare; in other words, that the "atrocities" of its enemies exceed even those of the Thirty Years' War. Inevitably, therefore, the after-effects, in terms of privation and barbarism, will be still graver and more prolonged. Is this a prospect to which even the least thoughtful among the British and American peoples look forward with enthusiasm?

8. *Nuremberg*

Within recent years, Nuremberg has acquired an unenviable notoriety as the scene of Nazi rallies. It had, however, many centuries of history to its credit before the

[25] The *London Times,* Aug. 17, 1943.

[26] *London News-Chronicle,* May 17, 1942.

Nazis were ever heard of, having been made a Free City in 1219. Less insensate ages than our own are likely to regard as catastrophic the fact that the choice of Nuremberg as a Nazi meeting-place was used by Bomber Command as an excuse for destroying the heritage of those centuries.

Nelson's Encyclopedia records of Nuremberg:

"It still retains its ancient walls and moat, and is one of the richest towns on the Continent in medieval buildings and works of art. Albrecht Dürer, Veit Stoss, Peter Vischer and Adam Kraft lived and worked here. . . The churches are full of priceless paintings, statuary and carvings. The Castle, dating from 1050, was enlarged by Frederick I (Barbarossa), and has served as a residence for many German Emperors. Of famous collections the Germanic museum is the most valuable, and a remarkable library, dating from 1445, is preserved in the old Dominican Monastery. Its picture gallery contains masterpieces by Holbein, Dürer and others."

Of this historic city—as priceless to Germans and all students of German culture as Oxford to ourselves—it is recorded[27] that 106 acres had been devastated by the end of 1942. Moreover Nuremberg, in addition to its irreplaceable treasures, had other characteristics of medieval cities, such as narrow streets and ancient ramshackle dwelling houses closely crowded together. In his famous *Berlin Diary,* William Shirer, describing a Nazi rally which he was sent to report, writes of "the narrow streets that once saw Hans Sachs and the Meistersingers . . . the Gothic beauties of the place, the façades of the old houses, the gabled roofs . . . the streets hardly wider than alleys . . . the beautiful old Rathaus."

On these narrow streets and crowded inflammable houses, the RAF dropped 1,500 tons of bombs on August 10, 1943, and another 1,500 tons on August 27. Forty-nine bombers were lost in these two raids. The German official figures —almost certainly an understatement—gave the number of the dead as 3,947. On August 29, 1943, the *Sunday Express* recorded:

"Few towns, even in Germany, can ever have received so shattering a blow in forty minutes as medieval Nuremberg, the Bavarian 'holy city' of the Nazi Party, which was the target of the vast armada of bombers that roared for more than an hour over Southeast England late on Friday.

"The result was summed up in one pregnant sentence by a rear gunner on his return. He said: 'I reckon we knocked the whole place flat.' "

Under the heading, "We've Finished the Job Properly," the "story of this great raid as told to the *Sunday Express* by the men who made it" is given by Edward J. Hart, *Express* air reporter:

"Nuremberg, center of some of Germany's most vital war industries, was a seething bonfire when our very strong force of four-engined bombers left the scene. Crews returning at dawn brought glowing descriptions of the effects of their heavy bombs and incendiaries.

"A solid red core of leaping flames, with columns of jet black smoke billowing up to 15,000 feet and visible 150 miles away, was the word picture painted for me by Flight-Sergeant John Crabb, of Glasgow, navigator of 'S for Sugar,' making his twenty-second raid on Germany.

" 'I never imagined a town could burn like that,' declared the rear gunner of 'A for Apple,' Sergeant Harry Smith, a Cardiff man, on his 37th raid."

In *Das Volksrecht,* Zurich, a Swiss correspondent reported on October 2, 1943: "The whole of Nuremberg is one great ruin, whereas the Siemens-Schuckert works, which were probably the object of the bombardment, received no damage."

9. *Three Prussian Towns (Anklam, Marienbad, Remscheid)*

Three first-hand reports describe the effect of obliteration raids upon small towns where the area, the population, and hence the capacity for defense, is limited, and the power of recovery almost nil. The first two accounts were given to the *News-Chronicle*[28] by repatriated British prisoners of war.

"With the wounded party came a group of RAF men, some of whom had been imprisoned more than 3½ years. These men had flown Whitneys, Fairey Battles, and other planes whose names are almost forgotten.

"These and other pilots passed through Anklam on their way to the port from which they were to be repatriated. Flt. Lt. Howard, a New Zealander, a fighter pilot, told me: 'We were absolutely staggered at the sight. It seemed as if the whole place, works and everything, had been knocked absolutely flat. It was as though it had been smashed over and over again. There was just nothing left.' "

Sergeant Roberts, RAMC, carried on the story:

"We embarked on the train and passed through Marienbad on the way back. It was flat, dead flat; everything the American bombers had set out to smash they had smashed irremediably.

"One of the things that struck me as I looked at the German women we saw on stations was their yellowness. They were yellow with undernourishment. Children were the same."

A description of a raid on Remscheid, with a population of 107,000, appeared in the *Sunday Express*:[29]

"Remscheid, medieval Rhineland city and center of Germany's machine tool industry, had its first and probably last RAF raid. . . A navigator said that the outline of the blazing mass below exactly corresponded with the contour of his target map. . . Remscheid measures 1½ miles from east to west, and 3½ miles north to south."

The night attack of July 30-31 on Remscheid was further described by Group Captain Hugh Edwards.[30] The attack, he said, was over in twenty minutes, and

". . . . photographic reconnaisance two days after did not show the town—for the simple reason that the town had ceased to exist. . . The real damage on a big scale is caused when the fires become uncontrollable. . . The aircraft attack . . . is one continuous concentration in order to saturate the defenses. . . Crews have no time to dwell on the terrible nature of the attack being carried out down below; they are intent on carrying out their mission and preserving themselves."

Doubtless these crews do not dwell today on the ghastly cost of that self-preservation to helpless civilians. Doubtless they do not picture the frantic children pinned beneath the burning wreckage, screaming to their trapped mothers for help as those "uncontrollable fires" come nearer. But what will be the effect of their deeds upon the more sensitive of these young flyers when in future years they come to know what "the terrible nature of the attack" really meant, and have time to think about it? They may, perhaps, be forgiven by some of their surviving victims, but will they ever forgive themselves? What aftermath of nightmare and breakdown will come? Has any

27 The *London Times,* January 1, 1943.

28 October 26, 1943.

29 August 1, 1943.

30 *London Daily Mail,* October 13, 1943.

nation the right to make its young men the instruments of such a policy? These are the questions that we ought to be asking ourselves today. Thousands of mothers of young airmen must already be asking them in their hearts.

10. The Ruhr and Vicinity

The Ruhr Valley first became famous in recent history when the French occupied it in 1923-4 in an attempt to enforce the astronomical reparations payments demanded from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. I myself spent some time in visiting this area in 1924 when the French occupation was still in force.

The towns of the Ruhr and neighboring districts—the industrial heart of northwest Germany, covering a total area of approximately the same size as Greater London—have suffered more from our repeated mass raids than any other section of Germany. Newspaper descriptions of these attacks have made the names of the "targets" familiar: Essen, Duisburg, Krefeld, Dortmund, Bochum, Wuppertal, Hagen, and many others.

On July 27, 1943, Essen, the home of Krupps' great factory, was described by Ronald Walker, the *News-Chronicle* Air Correspondent, as the "most bombed city." At this date the destruction of Hamburg was not yet complete, nor had the "annihilation attacks" on Berlin yet begun. Essen was the second city, after Cologne, to receive one of Bomber Command's new 1,000-bomber "saturation raids" during the early summer of 1942.

A German letter, quoted in *The Listener* (May 13, 1943), described a heavy RAF raid on Essen on March 5:

"It was an inferno; bomb followed bomb; streams of phosphorus flowed from above and incendiary bombs fell without interruption. It is a miracle we are still alive. Our district is completely in ruins, and only western parts of Essen remain standing. We are all completely worn out."

On July 3, 1943, the *News-Chronicle* stated that 100,000 people in Essen had no roof over their heads. Not content with this measure of suffering and desolation in an armament-making city, Bomber Command delivered another 2,000 tons of bombs in fifty minutes on July 25.

"By the end of that time smoke from a mass of fires was rising to over 20,000 feet. . . . Three times previously 1,000-ton attacks had been made on the city, and by the night of May 7-8 the total tonnage of bombs unloaded on to the five square miles of Essen topped 10,000 tons. . . . Early last month stories coming out of Germany spoke of Essen as a dead city." (*News-Chronicle,* July 27.)

According to the *News-Chronicle,* "more than 1,000 acres of the industrial town of Wuppertal were devastated in Bomber Command's attack on the night of May 29. . . . One thousand acres of devastation in a town of 200,000 inhabitants means that to all intents and purposes that town has disappeared."

The *Daily Mail* added on July 5, 1943:

"First the RAF took Barmen, the eastern half of the city, (i.e. Wuppertal) and 'almost wiped it out.' Less than a month later, Elberfeld, the western half, had its turn."

Further grim details of these raids were given by a Swiss correspondent in *Das Volksrecht* (October 2, 1943):

"According to the police officer, frightful scenes occurred in Wuppertal as the city is situated in a valley and possessed narrow streets which made any flight impossible. Numerous victims ran round aimlessly like burning torches until they died. 18,000 people were killed by the bombardment."

In May, 1943, came the breaking by bombs of the Eder and Mohne dams. No attempt appears to have been made to warn the helpless populations of the flooded valleys, with the result, as recorded in the *Sunday Express* for May 30, "Reuter's special correspondent in Stockholm cabled last night that according to good authority the number of casualties in the Eder and Mohne dams bombings is 70,000."

Before this the *News-Chronicle* had commented on May 19:

"Westphalia has already been bombed on a scale unknown outside Germany. Not even at the height of the blitz against Britain has the misery of our people compared with that of the Ruhr. Now comes a new terror—the devastation of scores of thousands of homes by flood."

The *National News-Letter* for June 24 added further details:

"The explosion of the Mohne dam was catastrophic. It started with a sharp tone which suddenly changed into the rushing and roaring of water which swept everything along with it through the Ruhr districts and hills. Many old historical parts of Soest were simply swept away. The water found its way into mines, and hundreds of workers were surprised by the water during the night shift. Many of them were drowned as the way out was completely blocked by the water. . . . There was no drinking water available in many areas."

Wing Commander Guy Gibson, who carried out the bombing of the Mohne dam, described what he saw at the critical moment when the dam gave way:

"A great column of whiteness rose up a thousand feet into the air and the dam wall collapsed. I looked again at the dam and at the water. It was a sight such as no man will ever see again. Down in the valley we saw cars speeding along the roads in front of this great wave of water which was chasing them and going faster than they could ever hope to go. I saw their headlights burning and I saw the water overtake them one by one, and then the color of the headlights underneath the water changed from light blue to green, from green to dark purple, until quietly and rather quickly there was no longer anything except the water.

"The floods raced on, carrying with them as they went viaducts, railways, bridges, and everything that stood in their path.

"Then I felt a little remote and unreal sitting up there in the warm cockpit of my Lancaster, watching this mighty power which we had unleashed; and then I felt glad because I knew that this was the heart of Germany and the heart of her industries, the place which itself had unleashed so much misery upon the whole world."[31]

What the Wing Commander did not see, and apparently had not the imagination to realize, was the woe and obliteration that he loosed upon thousands of sleeping families, each home a shelter, up to that minute, of life made in the image of God.

Summary of the Ruhr Damage

On June 6, 1943, the *News-Chronicle* quoted a Berlin broadcast by a German war reporter describing raided areas in the west and northwest of the Reich:

"In these areas war gripped the civilian closer than it gripped some soldiers in the front line, and soldiers from the east front passing through stood silent at the train windows bowing before the sacrifice."

"An account of what the Ruhr looks like . . . received by industrialists in France and transmitted to Madrid," was reported in the *Daily Telegraph* on August 6, 1943:

[31] *Atlantic Monthly,* December, 1943.

"The damage is unbelievable. The Ruhr Valley is only one endless line of debris covered with twisted steel and the smoke from still burning oil. It is estimated that 250,000 Ruhr workers have suffered from forms of shell-shock as a result of the RAF bombing."

The Spectator added on September 17:

"Photographs of the blitzed cities, when examined through the red and blue glasses which throw up the picture in three dimensions, show a devastation almost incredible in its extent and completeness."

Still more recent and graphic details were given by the Swiss correspondent who described the scenes at Wuppertal:

"Over 70 percent of the big western towns have been destroyed. A comparison with the French territories destroyed during the First World War is impossible; destruction in western Germany today is already many times greater than that of the last war in France.

"It is characteristic that the destruction is greatest in the center of the cities, whereas certain industrial establishments which the British reported as destroyed showed, as I witnessed myself repeatedly, no damage whatever. . . . The cities which our train passed presented a frightful sight. Dortmund, Gelsenkirchen, Oberhausen and Duisberg are great heaps of rubble from which ghostly mineshafts protrude. The heaps of ruins are sometimes so enormous that one often wonders whither they must ultimately be transported."

Perhaps some economist with the foresight of John Maynard Keynes can calculate the material consequences for Europe of this wholesale blotting-out of Germany's heavy industries and the cities that housed them. Among those who possess imagination, the psychological consequences by which the future of international relations will be determined are already beyond question.

The Consequences of Obliteration Bombing

What are the effects of our policy of mass-bombing upon ourselves? What are they likely to be for Germany, with its civilian casualties already amounting to over a million, and the devastation of its ruined cities far exceeding the damage done to the battle areas of France between 1914 and 1919?

The results for ourselves may be twofold, the one at present speculative, the other certain. Physically, we may suffer costly reprisals in the near future, even though they may come in the form of a desperate blow struck by a beaten enemy in the final agony of the struggle. Morally, we are already involved in a process of deterioration which displays itself in a loss of sensitivity, and in words and actions showing callous indifference to suffering.

At a Berlin reception reported in *The Times* on September 28, 1943, Herr von Ribbentrop said:

"The future will show whether Churchill's bomb warfare against the civilian population is a good or bad idea. Every single bomb, every destroyed home, every dead person makes the German people more determined to make the British pay."

On October 13, 1943, after eighteen months of severe obliteration bombing, Noel Panter admitted in the *Daily Telegraph:* "Throughout Germany, there is public clamor for reprisal raids on Britain." A fortnight later, *The Times* of October 25 reported Lord Trenchard as saying in an address to Flying Fortress crews: "The Hun is standing up to it better than a great many people expected, but he will go in time; he always has."

We may well ask exactly what Lord Trenchard's idea of "in time" signifies in terms of agony for German children and their parents.

On November 15, 1943, the *Evening News* reported a "Hate Britain" meeting at Mannheim.

"More than 30,000 people, carrying spades and axes, attended a meeting addressed by Ley, German Labor Front chief, at Mannheim before starting to clear away debris from Allied raids, said the German radio today. Paris radio says that the meeting was called 'to display hatred for Great Britain and to protest against the savage bombing of German towns.' "

In a BBC talk on June 30, 1943, Ellen Wilkinson said: "The enemy must, in view of our terrible raids, either hit back at us, or admit his own weakness." One of our own Ministers of "Home Security" thereby admits that retaliation for our raids may mean a heavy loss of life amongst British people in that process of "shortening the war" by experimental bombing which is favored by the Archbishop of York and others. (The former Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Chichester have spoken against the policy in Parliament.)

The adoption of the enemy's standards which we earlier deplored is only one sympton of the moral deterioration, and the corruption of youth, of which this summary contains so many examples, brought about by two years' practice of intensifying cruelty. The Pope, speaking to nineteen Cardinals on his birthday in June, 1943, truly stated:

"The progressive use of means of war which make no distinction between military objectives and non-military targets, and the increasing violence of the technique of war, draw attention to the sad and inexorable race between actions and reprisals, which happens to the detriment, not of certain particular peoples, but of the whole community of nations."[32]

Another observation which shows the tie-in of mass bombing to the totalitarian pattern, came from the Continent last September in a letter from Visser t' Hooft, Secretary of the World Council of Churches. It was published in *Christianity and Crisis,* December 13, 1943. In the midst of the letter Visser t' Hooft says:

"The full effects of totalitarianism have only now come to make themselves felt, since total warfare creates a situation in which the whole process of destruction and uprooting is accelerated in an extraordinary degree. Total war means that the outward conditions of life become such that most of the last remaining strongholds of free, healthy life, which exist in their own right and not merely as a product of the will of the state, are also destroyed. Totalitarianism had already made an onslaught on the family, but it is only through the process of mass-mobilization for the army and labor front, through evacuation and deportation that the menace to family-life becomes truly mortal. Similarly, through the merciless liquidation for the sake of the total war-effort of all professions, in which men retain a certain amount of autonomy, practically all classes become proletarian.

"It must be added that the wholesale bombardments which involve the complete blotting out of whole cities have the same effect. Men and women who had still a home and a job to defend, have suddenly become people who have nothing to lose and are thus thrown into the mass of uprooted creatures who are merely the passive playthings of forces which they do not comprehend. At the same time these bombardments create the impression that the whole world has gone totalitarian. It is believed that no country

[32] *News-Chronicle,* June 3, 1943.

recognizes any longer the limits of consideration for human life and of moral standards. It seems that there is nothing left except the war of all against all."

And to what ultimate end? Will nothing make real to us the abomination of utter desolation which Bomber Command is preparing for post-war Europe? The *National News-Letter* of July 5, 1943, warned its readers: "When the clouds of war have passed there will be terrible devastation in Germany—both physical and moral." *The Spectator* added on July 30, 1943:

"We shall not know until we occupy Germany just how much damage our raids have done; for while our photographs told the truth, it is always less than the truth, and what we have repeatedly found when we occupied enemy sites in Africa and Sicily justifies our assuming that the understatement is considerable."

It is hardly surprising that Mr. John Masefield, the Poet Laureate, warned his hearers in a speech at the annual luncheon of the National Book Council on October 26, 1943: "Europe totters on the brink of a dark time which may conceivably be the darkest time the world has ever known."

American Postscript

By JOHN NEVIN SAYRE

Various measures have been suggested for alleviating the horror and cruelty of massacre by bombing. Although none of them can be thoroughly satisfactory to pacifists, who from their standpoint must abjure the whole war method, yet as in the case of the blockade, pacifists may without abatement of opposition to war support plans designed to lessen war's damage to children and civilians. We have supported the limited feeding operations allowed in Greece, the relief work formerly permitted to the Quakers in France, the proposals of Mr. Hoover's Committee to extend such work to the little countries of Europe, the Taft-Gillette Bill, etc. Today, in the matter of bombing we call attention to a number of proposals which appear to have merit.

Among them are agreements to refrain from bombing "open towns." President Roosevelt on September 1, 1939 addressed an "urgent appeal to every government which may be engaged in hostilities publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event, and under no circumstances, undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities, upon the understanding that these same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all of their opponents." Again on September 18, and on December 1, he reiterated this appeal. On May 1, 1940 he said to the American Red Cross:

"The bombing of helpless and unprotected civilians is a tragedy which has aroused the horror of all mankind. I recall with pride that the United States consistently has taken the lead in urging that this inhuman practice be prohibited. I am glad that the International Red Cross, at its meeting in London in 1938, urged that joint steps be taken by the governments to prevent such outrages in the future."

Holding to this line, the United States a few weeks after Pearl Harbor withdrew General MacArthur and our High Commissioner of the Philippines from Manilla, asking the Japanese to regard it as an undefended city and refrain from its bombardment—an appeal which in the main they respected. Before that, the Nazis in 1940 had treated Paris as an open city, respecting the declaration of the French Government about it, although at that time they were masters of the air in that region. But today, when we have preponderant air power, shall we forget this? As the *News-Chronicle* said in a statement on August 10, 1943, "Do we wish to acknowledge our inability to reach even their standards?"

A variant proposal to "open towns" is that of the *Bombing Restriction Committee* in Great Britain for "sanctuary areas." The gist of it is given in the following memorandum:

"Humanitarian considerations demand the recognition by the belligerents of sanctuary areas to which women and aged people could be evacuated from all towns having any kind of military objective *in advance of bombing*. In such sanctuary areas non-combatants could live free from the oppression of fear—fear for their own lives and for the safety and well-being of their children. Such sanctuary areas would be especially beneficial to invalids and people of highly nervous temperament who suffer agonies of apprehension if they have not the financial means to travel a long distance to get away from the threatened area.

"The sanctuary areas should be located, if possible, within 100 to 150 kilometres of the Ruhr and of the great industrial cities in other parts. It would be an advantage to include towns which have no military establishments or munition works and are situated on unimportant railway lines which do not carry military traffic; such towns, for instance, as Bonn, Homburg, Baden, Heidelberg, and other university towns and health resorts. In Italy there would be no difficulty in finding non-industrial towns to act as the centers of sanctuary areas.

"To assure the complete absence of military preparations and personnel from the sanctuary areas a corps of observers composed of the nationals of neutral countries could be formed. It could be placed under the control of the International Red Cross, or of a neutral commission on which the Vatican would be represented. The Spanish Civil War provides an example of a corps of neutral observers, working on the whole satisfactorily."

Details are added giving suggestions by which such sanctuary areas could be made recognizable from the air.

Of course objections can be raised to proposals like the above, but one suspects that the basic difficulty, at present, lies in the depth of spiritual demoralization to which our nations have sunk and that our responsible leaders could devise some amelioration of the devastating effect of bombing on children and civilians, had they the will to do so.

This situation is pregnant with further horror in the temptation, perhaps to Germany and certainly to the United States in the Pacific, to go in for poison gas operations. That we are near the edge of such a development is suggested by several articles appearing recently in the press, which may be trial balloons. *Newsweek* on December 20, carried an article by Ernest K. Lindley, well known Washington columnist entitled, "Thoughts on the Use of Gas in Warfare." The article opens with these ominous paragraphs:

"A week ago Admiral Pratt wrote on the lessons of Tarawa. To his conclusions this lay reporter feels impelled,

after extensive inquiry, to add one assertion: that the use of gas would have enabled us to capture Tarawa almost without a casualty.

"If the tons of bombs dropped on Tarawa from the air had been heavy gas, of the mustard type, the island would have been so thoroughly drenched that in all probability not a defender would have survived. After four or five days, giving time for the gas to evaporate, the Marines could have walked ashore without opposition. In the end, every Jap on Tarawa was killed or committed suicide anyway, except a handful of laborers and a few soldiers captured while unconscious from wounds. But the victory cost us, in dead and wounded, several thousand of our most valiant youth.

"In a drive across the Central Pacific, the use of gas would expedite our progress and diminish our casualties. Any small area that can be segregated is ideal for the use of gas. The small islands of the Pacific fit the prescription. We have the transportation capacity, in planes—supplemented if necessary by naval bombardment—to smother most of these island outposts of Japan with gas."

The *Montreal Daily Star* on December 23 printed a Washington dispatch in one paragraph of which Major General William N. Porter, chief of the chemical warfare service was quoted as saying:

"If we get a good hard smack from an enemy employing gas, we may change our minds about using it and gain tremendous advantage by employing our resources for waging chemical warfare. If gas warfare started, we believe we would be able to spring a big surprise."

Although the article reports President Roosevelt as determined not to resort to gas unless the Japanese or Germans use it first, it often happens in war, riots, etc., that a mistake is made in believing that the other side has started something diabolical when in fact this is not the case, but an accident, or other untoward circumstance, has lighted the fuse of fear and suspicion which set reprisals and counter-reprisals going. Or it might not be difficult, in a pinch, to arrange some kind of a "frame up" which made it appear that the enemy had employed poison gas against us. Even this might not be necessary in view of the outburst of hatred which broke loose after the War Department's release of the story of Japanese mistreatment of captured American soldiers. "Poison gas," it could be said, "is a justifiable measure of retribution." And public opinion might be further brought around by propaganda to the effect that anyway most Japs kill themselves rather than submit to capture so if we destroy them suddenly with poison gas, it will mercifully shorten the time of their dying and save innumerable lives of our own soldiers. We might experiment by smothering with gas an "island outpost," but once started down this road what moral scruples would stop us from trying to smother Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, or any other cities that we picked as targets?

Are the churches and the Christian conscience so much in pawn to military strategy that they will surrender *everything* to the latter? Churchill told Parliament, "There are . . . no lengths in violence to which we will not go."[33] Christ said, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." Which leader today will the churches follow?

While this essay has dealt, in the main, with only one phase of modern warfare, we do not for a moment consider that a Christian conscience which is alive can be appeased by the establishment of "open towns" and areas of refuge, by the prohibition of poison gas, or by other "humanitarian" rules of war. These things conscience should press for, while at the same time it uses the deeds of war to persuade men of the total incompatibility of the whole war method with the Christian religion and ethic.

The only right alternative to the mass murders that go with the blockade, bombing and invasion of a continent is willingness on the part of the United Nations to make an undictated and creative peace on the basis of equality of all peoples. That, in the last analysis, is what we must continue to struggle for, if we would not see civilization perish in the flames.

[33] Address to Parliament, September 21, 1943.

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